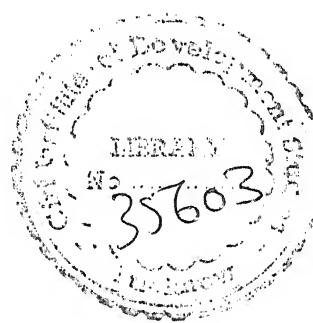


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# THE PROBLEM OF BEGGARY AND MEASURES UNDERTAKEN BY THE STATE

## (A Case Study of Lucknow)

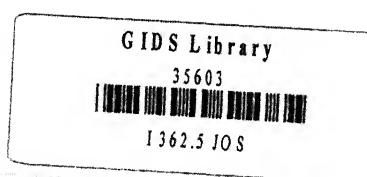


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## PREFACE

This report is the outcome of a study undertaken by us of the background of beggars in Lucknow and of the condition of the beggar home being run in the city by the Directorate of Social Welfare. We had been intrigued by the fact that despite being the state capital and the headquarter of the Directorate of Social Welfare there were such a large number of beggars roaming around freely in public places such as railway station, bus station, temples and market places. Moreover, this is taking place even though the state government passed the Anti-Beggary Act as far back as 1975, which clearly prohibits begging.

The findings of our study highlight the fact that there is a sizeable beggar population in the city and they belong to the same district as well as a number of adjoining districts. In fact many beggars even belong to other states as well. The other disturbing fact is that although Lucknow has a beggar home with a capacity to house 200 inmates it has had no inmate at all since 1993-94. This is so because the condition of the building and boundary wall is so bad that security is a serious problem. Moreover, the procedure adopted to catch beggars and convict them is tedious and complex. Consequently the staff of the home is either lying idle or has been sent out on deputation to another office. During the year 2000-2001 the beggar home received a grant of Rs.16.52 lakhs.

In the light of the facts stated above it is imperative that the government must tackle this social evil effectively not only in the state capital but all over the state.

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## **Section I : Introduction**

For the sake of convenience beggary may be defined as an act of soliciting or receiving cash or kind, in a public or private place without doing any work in exchange for the money received.

Despite the fact that beggary is an ancient concept its very nature has undergone considerable change over the years. According to the Hindu philosophy giving alms to saints was considered to be a noble act and even in the 'Buddhist' as well as 'Jain' religions 'Bhiksha' had a significant place. In fact even in the Muslim religion 'Zakat' is an important religious custom. What is significant is the fact that during the ancient period begging was mainly practiced by the saints or religious mendicants who had renounced the world. Since they spent a majority of their time in penance, they moved out at fixed times and knocked on the doors of people asking for food so as to sustain themselves. Begging, for them was a means of survival rather than an occupation. Over the years, however, begging has been taken up by all sorts of people as a full time occupation so as to earn a means of livelihood.

The primary reason for begging being taken up as a full time activity on a large scale reflects on the failure on the part of an individual to earn a living through non-respectable means. This, to some extent, also reflects on the failure of the state to be able to provide gainful employment to the section of population which is engaged in begging.

Beggary leads to various social evils. It is generally observed that poverty, deprivation, physical disability or deformity and neglect are some of the primary reasons that are responsible for this evil. Besides this, it is also seen that many

people are found begging under compulsion in cases where an individual is forced to beg by some anti-social elements. In a nut-shell it may be said that a cross-section of the beggar population will comprise of professional and non-professional beggars, that will comprise of male, female and children; and will consist of the able bodied, the disabled, the diseased and the religious mendicants.

Till we attained independence the problem of beggary within the overall framework of social welfare, was a more or less neglected aspect. It was only after independence that some steps have been taken in the field of social legislation. The Ministry of Law held the opinion that beggary is a state subject and so it does not figure in any of the lists contained in the Seventh Schedule of the Indian Constitution. However almost all the states and Union Territories have enacted the Anti-Beggary Act. The state of Uttar Pradesh passed the Act on August 14, 1975 and has since been amended once on September 6, 1978. The Act has six chapter and it comprehensively defines begging, the penalties which a beggar can be subjected to and the institution in which he can be placed for correction and the exact procedure to be adopted through which a beggar can be convicted and placed in a corrective home.

Under this Act, therefore, an individual found begging can be caught by the police, placed before a judicial magistrate and sentenced to serve a term in a certified institution known as a Beggar Home. In accordance to the rules of the 1975 Act the duration of stay in a certified institution ranged from a minimum of six months and upto one year. However, after the amendment of 1978 the duration has been raised from a minimum of one year and upto two years.

The social welfare department of the state government is responsible for dealing with the problem of beggary. After the Prevention of Beggary Act was

passed in 1975 beggar homes were set up in eight districts of the state at Varanasi, Allahabad, Lucknow, Kanpur, Agra, Mathura, Hardwar and Faizabad. Each of these homes is located in the district headquarter with the exception of Faizabad. Faizabad is an exception in the sense that it is the only place where there are separate homes for male and female beggars. The only other place which has a beggar home for females is Hardwar but these both home are housed within the same building. Each home has the capacity to house 200 inmates and is headed by a Superintendent. The other staff comprises of teacher, trainers, nurse/compounder, cook, sweeper, clerks, storekeeper, peons and watchmen. The actual staff varies from one home to another.

A proper procedure is laid down for apprehending beggars and for placing them in these homes. The Superintendent of the home gives a written request to the concerned police station to conduct a raid for rounding up the beggars. The raids are conducted with the help of an Inspector or Sub-inspector and two Constables. Once the beggars are caught the Inspector frames a proper charge sheet and each beggar is then produced before a judicial magistrate. On the basis of the charge sheet these beggars are remanded in the custody of the respective beggar homes for 14 days during which they may be properly tried before being found guilty. Once convicted, they have to serve the term as specified by the magistrate.

The beggar homes are expected to take proper care of the inmates. An amount of rupees eight per day is sanctioned per inmate and this is to be spent on their food, clothing and other requirements such as soap, etc. The homes also provide medical facilities to its inmates. Each home has a nurse or a compounder for the day to day requirements and a doctor visits the homes once a week. In case of serious illness, the inmates are hospitalised in the government hospitals.

The main objective of placing these people in these homes is to rehabilitate them such that they may be able to take up a proper vocation on being released from these homes. They are given training in tailoring, carpentry, spinning and weaving, caning of chairs, etc. There is also a provision to pay an amount of Rs.1500 to each inmate in order to assist him to take up some occupation in accordance with the vocational training received by him. The inmates are also taught to make them literate.

The Directorate of Social Welfare allocates funds every year to run these beggar homes. Table 1 gives a picture of expenditure made by the Directorate on these homes.

*Table 1: Year-wise Actual Expenditure of the Directorate of Social Welfare on Beggary*

Year	Pay and Allowances	Other Establishment Expenses	Expenses On Inmates	Total Expenditure on Beggary	Total Exp. as a % of Total Exp. of the Directorate
1992-93	56.75 (65.26)	21.42 (24.63)	8.79 (10.11)	86.96 (100.00)	6.32
1996-97	86.06 (80.62)	11.29 (10.58)	9.40 (8.80)	106.75 (100.00)	17.81

*Source : Directorate of Social Welfare, Lucknow*

It is evident from the table that between 1992-93 and 1996-97 there has been an increase in the total grants received to run the beggar homes of the state. However, a closer look at the figures will reveal that the increase has mainly been in order to meet the expenses on the pay and allowances of the staff appointed in the beggar homes. In 1992-93 this expenditure was 65.26 per cent of the total expenditure but in 1996-97 its share went upto 86.06 per cent.

It is rather unfortunate that most of these homes do not have a proper staff, the buildings are in a very dilapidated condition and the allowance of Rs.8 per day per inmate is too small an amount to be able to meet even the daily expenditure on providing meals to the inmates. Moreover, the process of conducting raids is rather tedious and there are various problems faced by the police and staff of the beggar homes. Consequently it is seen that most of these beggar homes either do not have any inmates at all or have inmates much below its capacity. Because of these bottlenecks the superintendent are not even very keen to conduct regular raids and ensure that beggars are caught on a regular basis. The other aspect, which has not been given due thought is the fact that although the prevention of beggary Act is applicable to the entire state, only eight districts have beggar homes. Thus we are faced with a situation wherein the existing homes are virtually without inmates and in other districts there are no such homes. It is, therefore, observed that in each and every district beggar are found roaming around freely without any fear whatsoever and the very purpose with which the Act was promulgated is being defeated and money to the tune of around one crore is being spent annually on the nine beggar homes of the state.

In this paper an effort is being made to look into the state of the beggar home in Lucknow and to have a glimpse at the socio-economic background of the beggars of Lucknow. In 1985 a study had been conducted by the Social Work Department of Lucknow University on *Beggar Problem in the City of Lucknow : An Evaluative Study*. Our study may therefore be able to throw some light on the changes, which have taken place related to this social evil in the state capital. However, the earlier study was confined only to the beggar home whereas we have also conducted a survey of the beggars in different areas of the city.

## Section II : A Profile of the Lucknow Beggar Home

The Beggar Home of Lucknow was established in 1967-68 and was first housed in a rented building in Mahanagar. The rent was Rs.1500 per month and the total number of rooms including those on the ground and first floor together was 12. Besides this it had two bathrooms and two toilets. But only one toilet and bathroom was used by the inmates. The location of the beggar home was shifted to its present premises (Thakurganj) in 1988. The building of the old Beggar Home is presently serving as an old house. Prior to being converted into a beggar home this building served the purpose of a Poor Home run by the Lucknow Municipal Corporation. Despite the fact that the building has now been taken over by the Directorate of Social Welfare the residential houses along with the building are still being occupied by the staff of the Municipal Corporation. The beggar home has around 15-16 rooms and there is a very big open courtyard inside the home but the condition of the building is so poor that the building is hardly fit for living. Moreover the boundary wall is broken since 1994 and as security is a serious problem. In fact even since the building was taken over for being converted into a beggar home no repair work has been undertaken. In the year 1992-93 the Nirman Nigam Lucknow carried out a survey and submitted its report on the anticipated expenditure involved in varying out the required repair and construction work. However no action has been taken on the report up to now.

So long as the beggar home was located in Mahanagar it used to have at least some inmates. However ever since 1988 and upto 1994, it is observed that no beggar was convicted even for a period of six months. All beggars who had been

caught were released after the remand period, which varied from 14 days to 3 months. In many cases the beggars were released on the first hearing itself after filling a personal bond. The last time that the beggar home had inmates was as far back as December 1993 when 21 inmates were kept for a period of 3 months. However since February 1994 there have been no inmates till the time of our survey (last visit to the home was made in May 2001).

At the time of our survey the Beggar Home had a total staff of 11 persons but it did not have a full time Superintendent. The Superintendent's position is lying vacant since January 1996. In the absence of a full time Superintendent the activities of the home suffer considerably. First of all the building has been in a dilapidated condition and no repair work has been done for a considerable time despite the fact that the Nirman Nigam carried out a detailed survey and submitted its report about the finances which will be required to carry out the repair and construction work in 1992-93. In case the Beggar Home was functioning with a regular full time Superintendent, there is a possibility that he would have followed up the matter and impressed upon the concerned officials the urgency in carrying out the repair work as soon as possible.

As a result of the condition of the building and the fact that the boundary wall is broken security poses a serious problem. In case any inmate is successful in escaping from the home the entire responsibility lies on the superintendent and other concerned staff of the home and they become accountable for the security lapse. This is the reason why the officiating superintendent is reluctant to carry out raids and round up the beggars which roam awarded truly and without any fear.

The security problem is posed not only by the fact that the boundary wall is broken but also as a result of the fact that the beggar home has only one chawkidar.

In any institution when constant vigil is needed round the clock it is not possible to do so with the help of one security guard. Any individual can not be asked to work beyond eight hours per day and so a minimum of 3 chawkidars are a must in any beggar home. The beggar home is left with no choice but to ask the other staff to act as security guards but these arrangements hardly serve the purpose and consequently there is always the possibility of an inmate escaping from the home of security arrangements are not adequate.

Despite the fact that the Prohibition of Beggary Act was passed as far back as 1975. There have been no effort at all to try and find out some of the shortcomings with which the Act suffers and which prove a hindrance activity. In the first place it is found that rounding up of beggars is restricted to up the eight districts which have a beggar home although the Act is applicable all over the state. Moreover, the general pattern is that whenever a raid is conducted it is mainly restricted to the railway station. Lucknow is no exception and so raids are conducted only at the Charbagh Railway Station. At other public places the police and beggar home authorities do not conduct raids for the simple reason that they receive still resistance from the general public whenever such a raid was needed. The major drawback of this is that beggars around temples and other public places move around begging fearlessly. On the railway station on the other hand a raid results in the rounding up of not of beggars but also other four persons who were merely sitting on the platform or loitering around awaiting the arrival of their train. In such a case, non-beggars are caught and have to face harassment since they are unable to prove their innocence. Even if they are left after the initial remand period they have gone through an unpleasant experience while the actual culprits had escaped as soon as they saw police and officials from the beggar home conducting the raid.

Another aspect which makes raids ineffective is the fact that as a rule of the able bodied beggars are rounded up. Moreover even when an able bodied persons in caught he has to be left if he is begging with his wife and child since Lucknow does not have a beggar home for women. If beggary has to be stopped effectively the government must ensure that was the aged and disabled are caught and sent to homes suited for them and that there should also be provision for keeping female beggars.

The other equally serious problem relates to the term that a beggar has to spend in a home. Although the term in for a minimum of one year and upto two years the experience of the Lucknow beggar home has been that between 1988 (the year since the home shifted to its new premises) upto 1994 no beggar has been kept in the home for even six months. A maximum member have been left after the remained period itself which stretches from around 14 days to 3 months. The rest have been released after the first hearing during which they have filled a personal bond to the effect that they will no longer beg. However, they are again found begging within a few days of their release.

The period of deduction for the inmates of a beggar home, was conceived of with the rational that these beggars will be provided vocational training for a period of 1-2 years and so they will be in a position to take up a respectable jobs on being released. Moreover, this period will also be helpful in inculcating in their better habits. Teach them about regularity, hygiene and cleanliness and provide an environment, which will be conducive in bringing about the desired change in them. However if a beggar is kept for periods ranging from 14 days to a maximum of six months there is hardly anything which the authorities can do to improve them in such a short time or

are they in a position to pick up any other vocation. In fact they are not even interested in changing their profession since begging does not involve any physical labour.

The Lucknow beggar home has vocational training facilities in Chikan work, woodcraft, tailoring and caning of chairs. However since inmates have not been staying in the home for a time period worth talking about, they never even showed the inclination to learn any of the activities which the beggar home instructors were competent to teach them.

Yet another aspect which makes the beggar home officials reluctant to admit inmates is the fact that the officially sanctioned amount towards the daily allowance per inmate is only Rs.8 or a meagre Rs.240 per month which is extremely inadequate. It must be kept in mind that with this allowance the beggar home has to provide food and all other items such as soap, hair oil, bedding etc. as per the norms prescribed by the government. Keeping in mind the present price structure it is not even possible to provide each inmate the three meals, which are due to him every day. Some time ago the allowance of the inmates of juvenile homes has been raised from Rs.240 to Rs.550 per month and the officials of the Lucknow beggar home are of the opinion that even in the state run beggar home the allowance per inmate per month should be brought at par to that of the juvenile homes.

The details about yearly allocation of funds to the Lucknow beggar home and its expenditure pattern are provided in Table 2, over the period 1992-93 to 2000-2001. It is observed that the allocation of yearly allowances of the beggar home have been increasing over the years. During 1992-93 the figure stood at Rs.6.89 lakhs. It rose to Rs.10.30 lakhs by 1995-96 and during the year 2000-2001 it was Rs.16.52

Table 2: Year-wise details of fund allocation and their expenditure  
(Beggar Home, Lucknow)

Funds and Expenditure	1992-93	1993-94	1994-95	1995-96	1996-97	2000-01
Allocation of Funds	689370	663000	902031	1030500	1128000	1652400
Heads of Expenditure						
a) Salary	286054 (49.23)	361100 (46.29)	368677 (41.24)	375511 (40.89)	391342 (32.15)	1071735 (65.00)
(b) D.A.	211562 (36.41)	320400 (41.08)	410313 (46.90)	428564 (46.66)	667732 (54.86)	415575 (25.20)
(c) T.A.	675 (0.12)	1000 (0.13)	6031 (0.62)	1196 (0.13)	- (-)	- (-)
(d) Other Allowances	43384 (7.47)	63700 (8.17)	61453 (6.87)	60455 (6.58)	66673 (5.48)	144872 (8.79)
(e) Interim Relief	- (-)	11000 (1.41)	22595 (2.53)	50355 (5.48)	75501 (6.20)	- (-)
(f) Office Expenses	20484 (3.53)	11600 (1.49)	15999 (1.99)	2351 0.26	16000 (1.31)	16676 (1.01)
(g) Expenditure on Inmates	18896 (3.24)	11200 (1.43)	- (-)	- (-)	- (-)	- (-)
Total	581055 (100.00)	780000 (100.00)	894068 (100.00)	918432 (100.00)	1217248 (100.00)	1648858 (100.00)

Source: The State Beggar Home, Thakurganj, Lucknow

lakhs. Thus between 1992-93 and 2000-2001 the funds received by the beggar home have witnessed more than a two-fold increase. If we look at the expenditure pattern of the beggar home it is clearly brought out that salaries and allowances of the staff working in these beggar homes account for the bulk of the expenditure. During the year 1992-93 for instance salaries, D.A., other allowances and interim relief together had a share of around 93 percent of the total allocation. Barely 3.24 per cent was the expenditure on the inmates. By 2000-2001 expenditure on the staff has touched a figure of almost 99 percent. Since 1994-95 there has been no expenditure on inmates because the beggar home has not had any inmates. In fact 1992-93 was the last year when the Lucknow beggar home had inmates over the

entire financial year with the exception of March 1993. The month wise figure of inmates is shown in Table 3.

Table 3 : Details of inmates in the Lucknow Beggar Home

Year	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Total
1992-93	22	29	13	21	46	57	42	42	28	24	11	-	335
1993-94	10	11	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	21

**The Beggar Home has had no inmate after 1993-94**

Although some inmates were housed in the beggar home during 1992-93 it is sad to observe that the figure in no single month even touched 60 despite the fact that the beggar home has a capacity to house 200 inmates. In the entire one year period the total inmates were only 335. In the next year the beggar home had only 10 and 11 inmates during April and May respectively and since then the beggar home has never housed any inmates. This is the sorry state of the beggar home run by the government in the state capital. During the last visit made by us in May 2001 we were told that out of a total staff of 18 which is the strength of this beggar home only 7 are presently in the beggar home. These include one clerk, two instructors and 4 class IV employees. The superintendent has been attached to the Directorate of Social Welfare and at present the District Welfare officer is holding the additional charge of Superintendent as well. It is extremely unfortunate that between 1994-95 and 2000-2001 the government has spent over 75 lakhs on the beggar home which does not hold any beggars and give the dilapidated condition of the home there is not even the likelihood that the beggar home will be in a position to keep any in the near future unless the government carries out a proper repair work of the beggar home. What is even more painful is that the accommodation with the beggar home is more than enough to accommodate the required number of 200 inmates but total indifference on the part of the government has led to the situation as it stands today.

### Section III : Analysis of the background of Beggars in Lucknow

In order to undertake a socio-economic analysis of the beggars in Lucknow, we conducted a survey of 50 beggars from different parts of the city such as the railway and bus station, market centres and some prominent temples. Moreover, in order to select a cross-section of different types of beggars we made special efforts to survey child beggars, females who beg, able-bodied beggars and those beggars who were disabled or aged. Since children normally beg along with their family members we included only five child beggars in our sample. The remaining sample was equally divided in the three categories mentioned above.

The basic characteristics of the beggars surveyed by us are presented in Table 4. The table reveals that the average age of respondent was 12 years in the case of the child beggars and between 36 years and 58 years in the case of the other categories. Most of these beggars (74 per cent) belonged to SC/ST or the OBC category as far as their caste is concerned among over sample we had 12 per cent belonging to High caste and another 14 per cent who were Muslims. On the whole the sample comprised of illiterates as they accounted for 72 per cent of the total sample only 22 per cent had received some schooling.

The demographic structure of the beggar households is given in Table 5. The table reveals an interesting phenomenon that the family size is rather low. Among the household of children it worked out to be 3.60 per household which was the highest among all the form categories of beggars. In the case of female and able-bodied beggars the household size was 2.73 and 2.01 respectively. In the case of the beggars who are disabled or aged the average family size was only 1.4. Thus the overall average size of the family worked out to be 2.22. As could be expected, a

Table 4: Basic Characteristics of the Beggars

Category of Beggar	Average Age (Yrs)	Caste			Educational Level				Total sample from the Category of Beggar
		High Caste Hindu	SC/ST & OBC	Muslim	Illiterate	Can read & write	Upto Class IV	Class V & above	
Child	12	1	3	1	4	1	-	-	5
Female	36	-	14	1	15	-	-	-	15
Able-bodied	36	2	8	5	10	-	1	4	15
Disabled/Aged	58	3	12	-	7	2	5	1	15
Total	41	6	37	7	36	3	6	5	50

Table 5: Demographic structure of Beggar Households

Category of Beggar	Sample size	Sexwise distribution of family			Educational level of the household				Activity Status					
		M	F	Total	Illite-rate	Literate but no schooling	Upto class IV	Class V or above	Child	Student	employed	Unemployed	Housewife	Aged
Child	5	10	8	18	17	-	1	-	5	-	11	-	1	1
Female	15	19	22	41	39	1	-	1	7	1	31	1	-	1
Able-bodied	15	22	9	31	24	3	2	2	4	-	26	-	1	-
Disabled/Aged	15	18	3	21	9	3	7	2	-	1	19	-	1	-
Total	50	69	42	111	89	7	10	5	16	2	87	1	3	2

very high percentage of the family members were illiterate (80 per cent). Only around 13.5 per cent had some schooling. The rest could read and write without having received any formal education. Among the total family members taken together of all the four categories of beggars around 16 per cent were children or students and around 5.5 per cent unemployed, aged or housewife. Thus around 78 per cent employed.

The details of the occupation of the employed members and their income are provided in Table 6. It is not at all surprising to observe that out of the 87 employed around 88.5 per cent are beggars. Around 7 per cent work as daily labourer and the rest have occupations such as picking rags. The income of the households is rather low. Around 14 percent households are concentrated in the income group of Rs. 501 to Rs.750 per month (40 per cent). In the highest income group of above Rs.1000 there were around one fourth of the total households and the rest were in the income

Table 6 : Occupational Structure of Employed persons and household income

Category of Beggar	Occupation of the employed members				Distribution of Households by Income Group (Rs. per month) Percentage share of Income from different sources							Percentage share of Income from different sources			
	Beginning	Wage Labour	Other	Total	Upto 500	501-750	751-1000	Above 1000	Total household	Average monthly Income	Begging	Wage Labour	Other	Total	
Child	10	1	-	11	-	1	1	3	5	1080	88.89	11.11	-	100.00	
Female	27	2	2	31	1	3	6	5	15	936	83.33	8.55	8.12	100.00	
Able-bodied	24	2	-	26	2	7	3	3	15	816	86.27	11.52	2.21	100.00	
Disabled/Aged	16	1	2	19	4	9	-	2	15	717	79.53	4.66	15.81	100.00	
<b>Total</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>849</b>	<b>83.93</b>	<b>8.74</b>	<b>7.33</b>	<b>100.00</b>	

group ranging between Rs.751 and Rs.1000. The overdue per household income worked out to be Rs.849. It was the highest in the case of the child beggars and was followed by the female beggar households. The lowest income was found among the disabled and aged beggars (Rs.717 per month).

The housing and living conditions are shown in Table 7. The table clearly highlights the fact that only 24 (48 per cent) of the respondents live in houses. These two are hundreents or Kuchha houses. The remaining (52 percent) respondents have no shelter and stay in and around the railway station, temples and other places without a proper shelter. Therefore, as can be expected, those who have some shelter are basically living in slum areas. Despite having a shelter only two respondents have toilet facilities and only 10 respondents have direct access to work.

Table 7: Housing and living conditions of the Households

Category of Beggar	Type of House			Locality			Toilet Facility		Water Availability	
	Hut	Kuchha	No shelter	Slum	Near Temple	Other	Yes	No	Yes	No
Child	5	-	-	5	-	-	-	5	-	5
Female	5	2	8	7	-	8	-	15	5	10
Able-bodied	7	1	7	7	1	7	1	14	4	11
Disabled/Aged	3	1	11	3	1	11	1	14	1	14
Total	20	4	26	22	2	26	2	48	10	40

If we look at the expenditure pattern of these beggars households (see Table No.8) it is observed that almost 70 percent of their income is spent on items of food. This is quite natural. When we look at different categories of beggars it is found that longest share of expenditure on food is in the households of child beggars. This too

Table 8: Expenditure Pattern of the Household

Category of Beggars	Items of Expenditure (Rs. Per month)					Average Household Saving (Rs.p.m.)	Average Household Income (Rs.p.m.)
	Food	Non- food items	Entertain- ment	Other	Total		
Child	732 (74.69)	110 (11.22)	86 (8.78)	52 (5.31)	980 (100.00)	100	1080
Female	598 (68.21)	145 (16.58)	97 (11.03)	37 (4.18)	877 (100.00)	59	936
Able bodied	537 (71.32)	103 (13.63)	69 (9.21)	44 (5.84)	753 (100.00)	63	816
Disabled/ aged	452 (67.94)	71 (10.62)	63 (9.42)	80 (12.02)	666 (100.00)	51	717
Total	549 (69.84)	107 (13.55)	77 (9.82)	53 (6.79)	786 (100.00)	63	849

is understandable because they have a relatively larger average size of the household among the different categories of beggars. The non-food items account for around 13.5 per cent of the total expenditure. The rest is spent on recreation (around 9.8 percent) and other items (6.8 per cent). Thus the average per household expenditure works out to be Rs.786 per month. Once again it is the households of the child beggars which have the highest monthly expenditure (Rs.980) while the lowest expenditure is found in the households belonging to the disabled and aged beggars (Rs.666/- per month) It is interesting to note that despite the fact that the per household income levels are rather low, the households are able to save some money every month. However, in our sample around 33 per cent households have admitted that their incomes are so low that they are unable to save any thing. The overall average monthly savings work out to be Rs.63/- per month and range from a high of Rs.100/- to a low of Rs.51/- per month in the case of the child beggars and disabled/aged beggars respectively. These savings, the beggars explain, are to meet occasional demand for additional household expenditure, for medical expenses and

to honour social commitments. There are times when a sudden urgency for money exceeds their savings and under such circumstances they are forced to either borrow money or to curtail even their necessary household expenditure.

We thought that it would be worthwhile to find out the origin of these beggars household. Out of the total respondents in our sample 7 percent were migrants. Out of these migrants as high as 86.5 per cent were from rural areas while the rest came from urban areas. Moreover, almost 57 per cent of these migrants were from different states while the rest belonged to other districts of Uttar Pradesh. Around 40.5 per cent of these migrants came to Lucknow between 1981-1990 and another around 38 per cent after 1990. The rest were early migrants who have been in Lucknow before 1980. (Table No.9). The most important reasons forcing these respondents to migrate were poverty and lack of any job (around 70 percent). The rest migrated for other reasons such as hoping to receive better income and because of their inability to work. Among the migrants who have come from different states the highest number belongs to those coming from Bihar. In fact as many as 12 out of the 16 migrants are from Bihar. The others were from Punjab, M.P., Kerala and Maharashtra.

When we looked into the factors behind these respondents to beg only one child admitted that he was being forced to beg by his parents. The rest have been begging for some other reason (Table No.10). Around 42 per cent respondents have stated that poverty has forced them to migrate and another 30 per cent have stated that since they were unable to get any job. They had no option but to take up to begging. A small proportion claim that they beg since it is their traditional occupation. The rest are those who are suffering from some disability or sickness. 30 per cent of these beggars have been in this profession for 5 to 10 years and another 26 per cent

for more than 10 years. In the remaining two categories of less than 3 years or between 3 to 5 years are equally divided.

**Table 9 : Details of origin and migration of the Beggars**

Category of Beggars	Non Migrant House-hold	Migrant House-hold	Total	Origin of Migrants		State from which Migrated		Year of Migration			Reasons for Migration		
				Rural	Urban	UP but different districts	Different State	Before 1980	1981-1990	After 1991	Poverty	No. of Job Opportunity	Other
Child	5	-	5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Female	1	14	15	13	1	8	6	-	9	5	8	1	5
Able bodied	2	13	15	12	1	7	6	3	4	6	6	5	2
Disabled /aged	5	10	15	7	3	6	4	5	2	3	4	2	4
Total	13	37	50	32	5	21	16	7	15	14	18	8	11

**Table 10- Factors Responsible for begging and Duration**

Category of Beggars	Factors responsible for begging							Duration since they have been begging				
	1	2	-	2	-	5	3	2	-	-	-	-
Child	1	2	-	2	-	5	3	2	-	-	-	-
Female	-	9	4	-	2	15	3	4	5	3		
Able-bodied	-	5	9	1	-	15	4	3	5	3		
Disabled/ Aged	-	5	2	-	8	15	1	2	5	7		
Total	1	21	15	3	10	50	11	11	15	13		

When we looked at the earning pattern of these beggars it was revealed that the average daily earnings of the respondents themselves from begging was around Rs.17.44. The average earnings per day were lowest among the child beggars (Rs.14.60) and highest for the disabled (Rs.18.27). It was more or less the same among the female and able bodied beggars. However, while the family members of the child, who were also begging earned more than the average earnings of the child (Rs.17.40 per day), the daily earnings of the family members from the remaining three categories was much less and so the overall average for the family members worked out to be Rs.11.67 per person per day (Table 11). These beggars spend between 5 to over 8 hours every day on begging to earn their daily bread. The maximum number of respondents are found in the group 6 to 8 hours (76 per cent) and the average number of hours spent begging works out to be around 7 hours for each category. A slightly higher proportion of the total respondents (54 per cent) feel that their earnings fall short of their requirements (Table 11). An interesting aspect of the pattern of begging is that these beggars do not beg at a fixed location as revealed by around 88 percent of the respondents. The most important places, which they normally visit are temples, railway or bus station and the market place. A small proportion also indulge in door to door begging occasionally. There are some periods of the year, particularly the main festive periods and special functions held by temples, when these beggars experience a prominent increase in their earnings. During such periods the daily earning may increase by upto fifty per cent. In our sample 80 households were such whose occupation was only begging. In the remaining households some members besides the respondent were engaged in activities other than begging. As has already been described earlier, they are either daily wage earners or rag pickers. These individuals an earning around Rs.650 per month.

Table 11: Details about begging and earnings from it

Category of Beggars	Normal daily earnings (Rs.) of respondents			Ave. daily earn- ings (Rs.)	Earning of other family members who beg			Ave daily earn- ings (Rs.)	No. of house spent on begging			Is the amount you earn suffi- cient?	
					Upto 10	11- 15	15 +		Upto 5	5-8	5+	Yes	No
	Upto 15	16- 20	20 +										
Child	4	-	1	14.60	-	3	2	17.40	2	3	-	2	3
Female	7	6	2	17.53	7	3	2	10.58	2	13	-	7	8
Able- bodied	6	6	3	17.50	5	3	1	10.00	1	12	2	7	8
Disabled/ Aged	3	8	4	18.27	-	1	-	11.00	1	10	4	7	8
Total	20	20	10	17.44	12	10	5	11.67	6	38	6	23	27

All these beggars seem to have lost all hope of doing anything other than begging. This is revealed from the fact that 88 percent of them have never even though of changing their profession or made even a half-hearted effort at doing so. Out of those who did think on these lines and made some effort were unsuccessful because they were either unable to find a job or were unable to raise requisite funds to become self employed.

As far as the awareness with respect to the Anti Beggary Act it was found that only 12 percent of the respondents had knowledge about the Act. As can be expected the children and females were totally unaware about the Act (Table 12). Similarly only 14 percent respondents were aware of the fact that a state run Beggar Home exists in Lucknow. Once again children and female had no knowledge about the beggar home. The beggars are hardly even harassed by the policemen as over 90 percent expressed the opinion that they face no problem from them (Table 13).

Table 12-Awareness about anti beggary Act

Category of Beggars	Knowledge of anti beggary Act		Trouble from Policemen		Do you know about the Beggar Home	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Child	-	5	-	5	-	5
Female	-	15	1	14	-	15
Able-bodied	3	12	3	12	4	11
Disabled/Aged	3	12	-	15	3	12
Total	6	44	4	46	7	43

Customers related to birth, death and marriage are observed by around 75 percent of the respondents. As far as marriages are concerned these households prefer to fix marriages within their caste and in a majority of cases (68 per cent) the dowry system does not exist. The average household expenditure in the case of a marriage works out to be just short of Rs.9000 for all the categories taken together. Among the different categories of beggars it was lowest among the households of the child beggars (Rs.3000) and highest among the female (Rs.11083). In the case of average household expenditure on birth and death the amounts ranged between Rs.767 and Rs.2208 in the case of ceremonies related to birth and Rs.1054 and Rs.2833 with respect to ceremonies following a death in the household. The overall average expenditure per household worked out to Rs.1531 and Rs.1587 in the case of ceremonies related to birth and death respectively (Table 13).

Table 13 : Details about customs observed

Category of Beggars	Customs observed			Marriage Performed	Dowry system exists	Yes	No	How do you manage their expenditure						
	Marriage	Birth	Death					Marriage	Birth	Death	Own Saving	Borrow from relatives	Family member	Expenditure
Child	1	1	1	1	-	-	-	3000	800	1200	1	-	-	-
Female	12	12	12	12	-	5	7	11083	2208	2833	5	4	3	-
Able-bodied	13	13	13	13	-	3	10	6769	1669	1054	7	5	1	-
Disabled/Aged	12	12	10	11	1	4	8	9750	767	1300	2	8	-	4
Total	38	38	36	37	1	12	26	8973	1531	1587	15	17	4	4

## **Section IV : Conclusion and suggestions**

Beggary is a very old social problem and its nature has changed considerably over a period of time. Initially begging was primarily the preserve of the religious mendicants who had renounced the world. They used to move from one door to another and beg for food to sustain themselves. Now, however, it has become a full time profession and people of different types have taken it up as an occupation and means of livelihood. An undesirable angle has also been added to it and that is forced begging where individuals including small children are forced to beg by anti-social elements. Begging, as is well known, leads to a number of social evils. Beggars today comprise of the diseased and the disabled, the destitute such as widow and those old people who have no one to look after them, the able bodied professional beggars, the religious mendicants and those who are being forced to beg.

Till we had attained independence the problem of begging was a relatively neglected are of social concern. However, there were some instances where efforts were made towards the rehabilitation of beggars. After independence beggary was made a state subject and most of the states and Union Territories enacted their own Anti-Beggary Act. In the state of Uttar Pradesh the "Uttar Pradesh Prohibition of Beggary Act" was passed on August 14, 1975 and this was amended once on September 6, 1978. This Act has six chapters and it comprehensively defines begging, the penalties which a beggar can be subjected to after being convicted and placed in a corrective home. The state has nine state run beggar homes in eight districts namely Agra, Allahabad, Faizabad, Hardwar, Kanpur, Lucknow, Mathura and Varanasi. Each home has a capacity to house 200 inmates. The inmates, once

convicted, have to serve a specified term in the beggar homes as directed by the Magistrate. The beggar home is to take full care of the inmates and an amount of rupees eight per day is sanctioned per inmate per day to be spent on their food, clothing, toilet items, etc. They have also to be provided medical facilities and given some vocational training so that they can utilize the skill acquired by them on leaving the beggar home and lead a more respectable life.

In the case of Lucknow the beggars are usually found centred around the various religious centres, railway station and the bus station. Some are also seen in the main markets as well. Previously the concept of door-to-door begging was quite common and a set of beggars were found in specific areas on a regular basis. There were fixed households, which regularly provided food, clothing and money to these beggars. But this concept has virtually ended and only in isolated cases are such beggars found moving in residential areas.

Our survey has revealed that the beggar population of Lucknow constitutes of not only those who belong to this district but also those who have come to the city from various adjoining districts such as Unnao, Barabanki, Rae Bareli, Gonda, Bahraich, Azamgarh and Hardoi, etc. There are some who have even come from different states such as Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and West Bengal. Generally the entire household of these beggars are engaged in begging as was revealed by around 85 per cent respondents. The others who are employed but do not beg are picking rags or work as daily labourers. The average monthly income of these beggar households worked out to be around Rs.850 per month. However, if we look at simply the earnings obtained by begging, they are getting around Rs.17.50 per day and they are spending between 5 to 8 hours per day on begging.

Despite the fact that Lucknow has a fairly large number of beggars, it is extremely surprising that the beggar home of Lucknow has not had even a single inmate since 1993-94. An analysis of the factors responsible for this situation reveals that the most important factor contributing towards this situation is the fact that the beggar home of Lucknow is lying in a highly dilapidated condition. The structure of the home is a very old building which has had no repair work since 1988. In 1992 the Nirman Nigam has carried out a detailed survey and had submitted a report regarding the construction and extent of repair work to be undertaken and the finances which would be required to carry out this work. Unfortunately nothing was done to do the needful. Given the present condition of the beggar home it is not possible to keep inmates because of inadequate security. Moreover, the procedure adopted to catch beggars, put them to trial and convict them is a very tedious procedure. Even in districts where the beggar homes are functional this aspect is a major cause of concern for the respective Superintendents of those beggar homes. This is the reason why all beggar homes have either no inmate or very few of them. As a result of the beggar homes being without inmates the existing staff of these beggar homes have been attached to other government offices and each home has only a skeleton staff who has no work to do. Yet every year between Rs.12 to 15 lakhs are spent on each beggar home.

Keeping these factors in mind it is essential that immediate repair work must be undertaken of the Lucknow beggar home on the basis of the report submitted by the Nirman Nigam. The space which this beggar home has is in fact large enough to accommodate much more than 200 inmates. As has already been pointed out the entire state has beggar homes in only 8 districts. Thus, if proper repair work can be done and the proper condition of the home maintained it can also be possible to

place inmates rounded up from not simply Lucknow but also the adjoining districts, which do not have a beggar home. The Anti-Beggar Act can not be successful unless these beggar homes are properly maintained and also that the entire state should be covered by the Act. Lucknow being the State capital must lead by example and its beggar home should serve as the role model for other beggar homes to follow.

Another important aspect, which requires due attention, is to bring about necessary changes in the procedure to catch the beggars and force them to serve a term in the beggar home so that they can be effectively rehabilitated. The problems vary as we see the various categories of beggars such as the child beggars, the female beggars, disabled and aged beggars and the able bodied persons who are not willing to do manual work and so find it more convenient to sit and beg. The government will have to tackle the problem for each category separately.

Once the Lucknow beggar home is properly repaired and inmates are regularly admitted for rehabilitation the government will also have to think positively in terms of enhancing the amount prescribed per day for the upkeep of the inmates. The present amount is not sufficient for the sustaining the different activities expected of each beggar home such as providing food, clothes, medical care, etc.

To sum up, it may be said that beggary is a social evil and so every effort must be made to eradicate the same. It is not by itself sufficient to promulgate laws or acts to abolish beggary. A radical change has to be brought about in the thinking of the beggar<sup>s</sup> and that is why it is essential to educate and rehabilitate them. Thus, the government must take all the measures to ensure that the objectives of the Act be fulfilled. Equally important is to educate the masses as well as make them aware that

by providing alms to such persons we are actually perpetuating the problem. Thus, even the average citizen must be made aware of the evils of beggary and they must realize that while they feel they are doing a noble cause by helping beggars, they are actually doing a dis-service to the society.